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INFO RUEHPO/AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO

UNCLAS PARAMARIBO 000038

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS
DEPT FOR HAITI EARTHQUAKE TASK FORCE
USAID/W FOR DCHA/OFDA
WHA/CAR
SAN JOSE FOR OFDA

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [EAID](#) [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [HA](#) [NS](#)
SUBJECT: Suriname's Offer of Humanitarian Assistance to Haiti

REF: 10 STATE 4854

¶1. (SBU) CDA Bell delivered REFTEL points to Ambassador Glen Alvares, Special Advisor to Suriname's Minister of Foreign Affairs, on January 20. Alvares indicated that all official Government of Suriname (GOS) offers of assistance are currently pending with CARICOM/CDEMA. Alvares, however, was uncertain of the state-of-play of the coordinated CARICOM assistance. In the meantime, Alvares said Suriname was considering whether to offer assistance instead through UN or UNASUR channels. He expected an emergency UNASUR meeting in the next few days to discuss a collective UNASUR response. Last week, GOS announced publicly its offer USD 1 million of direct aid to Haiti. Suriname's National Coordination Team for Disasters, Police, Fire Department, Army, Red Cross, and the Ministry of Health also announced intention to send goods and personnel for security and rescue operations. Alvares indicated possible logistic challenges for shipping any assistance to Haiti, especially for the privately-donated commodities, but stopped short of requesting support at this time.

¶2. (SBU) In a separate meeting, Post learned that Suriname's Defense Forces is considering a platoon-sized deployment to Haiti. It is not yet clear whether this is an official GOS offer yet, and if so, under what auspices. Post is seeking more information and will report SEPTEL, as appropriate.

¶3. (U) Private Surinamers, organizations, and companies, meanwhile, have been mobilizing to offer aid (money, water, clothes, and food). The Red Cross in Suriname and two media groups (Bijlhout Media and Mac IT Media) are collaborating on a 15-hour "Help Haiti" radiothon and telethon on January 20. Other fundraising activities have included an artwork auction, cell phone subscribers' SMS donations, and business specials. For example, McDonald's Suriname is donating 1 USD for every Big Mac or Big Mac Combo sold over the next week to the International Red Cross. Fernandes Bottling Company will also send, together with the other Coca Cola Bottlers in the Caribbean, water to Haiti.

¶4. (SBU) There are approximately 3,000 Haitians living in Suriname, most of whom are linked to the banana industry, though there are closer to 30,000 living in neighboring French Guiana, according to Suriname's Honorary Consul for Haiti, Michael Vervuurt. Vervuurt praised U.S. efforts and indicated the Haitian community here, like most Surinamers, felt the same way.

¶5. (U) Post is engaging officials, contacts, and the media using daily guidance, talking points and other distributed materials.

BELL